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3 1980 VOLUME 19 MARCH

MAR 1980

FAMILY LIFE

THE FREIRES AND THEIR EVERYDAY LIFE

THE VOICE OF THE VERY YOUNG

"IF PARENTS FULLY REALIZED THE DEMANDS THAT THIS GREAT SACRAMENT BRINGS, THEY COULD NOT FAIL TO JOIN IN MARY'S HYMN TO THE AUTHOR OF LIFE – TO GOD – WHO HAS MADE THEM HIS CHOSEN FELLOW WORKERS."

(Pope John Paul II)

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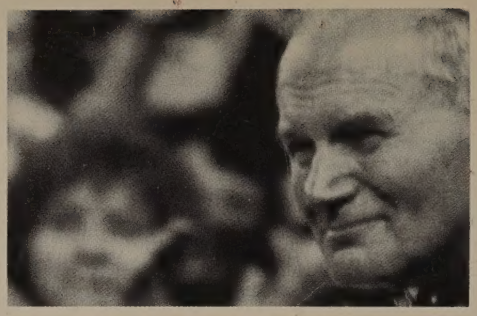
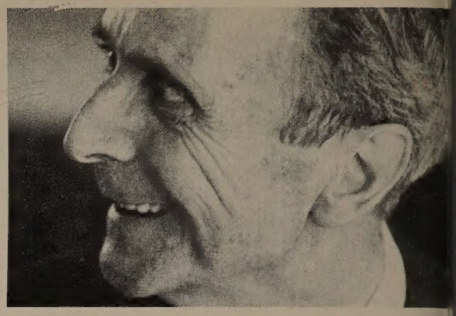


Juan de Yzaguirre Lopez

2 *John Paul II in the U.S.A.: "Make Jesus always part of your hunger for truth and justice, and part of your dedication to the well-being of your fellow human beings."*



9 *The apex of Christian living: Igino Gio dani describes how the Christian eth has developed through the centuri and teaches us that love must not on be the base on which that character grafted, but is also the peak towar which Christians must strive in th daily life.*

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Lucille Michaud

COVER: THE FREIRE FAMILY

3 *Family Life: Small joys and small t gedies in the Freire family, as in ma other families! Christ, however, at t center of their life, enlarges their ho zon to encompass the world.*

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A program of life

POPE JOHN PAUL II IN THE U.S.

"ENJOY THE PRIVILEGES OF YOUR YOUTH: THE RIGHT TO BE DYNAMIC, CREATIVE AND SPONTANEOUS; THE RIGHT TO BE FULL OF HOPE AND JOY; THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE MARVELOUS WORLD OF SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE; AND ABOVE ALL THE CHANCE TO GIVE OF YOURSELF TO OTHERS IN GENEROUS AND JOYFUL SERVICE."

A BETTER WORLD THROUGH YOU

We continue the publication of excerpts from the talks given by Pope John Paul II during his visit to the United States last October. His words are unforgettable, and as we said in the previous issues, a program of life to ponder, cherish and fulfill.

My first greeting on arriving at this campus is for you! To all of you I offer the peace and joy of our Lord Jesus Christ! I am told that you have held an all-night prayer vigil to ask God's blessing on my visit. Thank you most cordially for such a wonderful expression of communion with me, and for such a beautiful gift. I would like to talk to you at length; I would like to listen to you and know what you think about yourselves and the world. But the time I have been given is so short.

One thing you have told me already; by choosing to welcome me with the offering of your prayers, you have demonstrated that you understand what is most important in your lives — your contact with God, your searching for the meaning of life by listening to Christ as He speaks to you in the Scriptures. I am pleased to know that reflection on spiritual and religious values is part of your desire to live fully this time of your lives. Materialistic concerns and one-sided values are never sufficient to fill the heart and mind of a human person. A life reduced to the sole dimension of possessions, of consumer goods, of temporal concerns will never let you discover and enjoy the full richness of your humanity. It is only in God — in Jesus, God-made-man — that you will fully understand what you are. He will unveil to you the true greatness of yourselves: that you are redeemed by Him and taken up in His love; that you are made truly free in Him who said about Himself: "If the son frees you, you will be free indeed" (Jn. 8:36).

I know that you, like students all over the world, are troubled by the problems that weigh on society around you and on the whole world. Look at those problems, explore them, study them and accept them as a challenge. But do it in the light of Christ. He is "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). He put all human life in the true dimension of truth and of authentic love. True knowledge and true freedom are in Jesus. Make Jesus always part of your hunger for truth and justice, and part of your dedication to the well-being of your fellow human beings.

Enjoy the privileges of your youth: the right to be dynamic, creative and spontaneous; the right to be full of hope and joy; the opportunity to explore the marvelous world of science and knowledge; and above all the chance to give of yourself to others in generous and joyful service.

I leave you now with this prayer: that the Lord Jesus will reveal Himself to each one of you, that He will give you the strength to go out and profess that you are Christian, that He will show you that He alone can fill your hearts. Accept His freedom and embrace His truth, and be messengers of the certainty that you have been truly liberated through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This will be the new experience, the powerful experience, that will generate, through you, a more just society and a better world.

God bless you and may the joy of Jesus be always with you! ■

(To the students of the Catholic University, Washington, D.C., on October 7.)

FAMILY LIFE

Weakened family life is one of the greatest social ills of our time.
The "New Family" Movement has as its aim to bring the Focolare spirit of unity into family life, so that each family will be deeply united within itself and with other families.

Carlos and Gail Freire
Edited by Elizabeth Grijalva

ONE WHO ENLARGES THE HORIZON

It was the end of a long and heavy day. As I got off the bus I began to wonder which way I should go. I was about to cross the street to ask information at a gas station when a horn honked. Not paying much attention, I continued walking, and vaguely thought to myself, "That car looks very familiar." No sooner had the thought crossed my mind, than I recognized Carlos' voice.

"I knew you would be walking this way, and I came to give you a lift."

Arriving home, the door flew open, and Cristina, age four, eagerly ran up. She introduced me to John, her little one-year-old brother, who was playing in the playpen. He pushed the ball in my direction, inviting me to play, with a grin.

Gail and Carlos live in a house in the suburbs of Toronto and I had invited myself for dinner for a specific reason. The normality of their family, and the genuine welcome put me immediately at my ease.

As I was giving Gail a hand in the kitchen to finish preparing the dinner, little Cristina folded the paper napkins with surprisingly great care. I watched her carefully carry her napkins to the table and I expressed my surprise at such behavior at her age.

Gail explained, "It's amazing how children pick up everything. She often hears Carlos and I sharing experiences about how we try to apply the Gospel in the different circumstances of the day. She listens and almost naturally tries to live the same way.

"The other day I was making some phone calls while Cristina was in the living room watching her favorite television program. Usually nothing can tear her away from that show, but this particular day her little brother was in his play chair on the floor when the phone rang. As I left the room I asked Cristina if she could watch him, and right away she said she would. I saw her go over to the television and shut it off. The phone call was much longer than I had anticipated, but I felt that I could continue talking because from what I could hear, Cristina was doing a very good job of taking care of the baby. When I finally went back into the room, she said, 'Did I be a good Gen[1] now? I'm happy because I made Jesus happy.' Other times when she leaves her games to help me she says, 'I want to love Jesus in your heart, Mommy.' "

Carlos, coming up from the basement with a couple of bottles of 7-up in his hands, joined the conversation. "It can happen, and it often does, that one of us makes a mistake in front of the children, but we always try to apologize. Cristina is very forgiving with us, 'That's okay,' she says, 'we can start again.' Then when she makes a boo-boo she apologizes and does her best to start again, too.

Carlos beamed proudly. I thought to myself that it was nice to see parents proud of their children for living the Gospel rather than for being the first and the best in everything.

As she drained the rice, Gail continued, "Today Cristina was getting into everything, and I was not loving her as much as I should. My patience was beginning to wear thin. Then I stopped and said, 'You know, Cristina, there is no unity between us. I am going to start all over again to love, would you like to start with me?' She said yes, we started, and it seemed as if the whole day changed."

As we sat down at the table I asked Gail and Carlos, "Did Cristina have a hard time accepting her baby brother?" "Not really," Gail answered. "In fact, our problem was that she was overly affectionate, to the point that she might have hurt him. One day, for instance, when the baby was two months old we found him in his little chair with chocolate crumbs all over his face. Cristina had gone into the kitchen to get her favorite kind of chocolate cake to share with him. We have never seen any antagonism or jealousy in her."

The everyday life of the Freires, as that of all families, is made of happy moments and little tragedies. I knew that Cristina had gotten hurt recently and so I asked about it. Gail was the first to answer, still betraying some emotion in her voice. "I was walking down the street with her ahead of me on her tricycle. Suddenly the tricycle got stuck in a gully and she went flying. She landed hard on her face, and as I raced up to get her I saw that her head was bruised, and bleeding profusely. I grabbed her in my arms and raced to the nearest hospital. She was bleeding from her mouth, and crying. In my anguish and worry while waiting in the emergency room, I suddenly remembered the suffering of Jesus on the cross, and I felt urged to say yes to my suffering out of love for Him. Then I began to play little games with Cristina to make her laugh and forget about her hurt."

Carlos continued with his side of the story, "When I found out about the accident, mixed emotions of anger and worry passed through me. In my mind I was blaming Gail for letting it happen.

Lucille Michaud

I struggled to overcome my feelings; I knew that I only had to do one thing in the present moment and that was to love. I asked a neighbor to watch John for us and ran off to the emergency room. There was Cristina all full of blood. The doctors spoke of a possible concussion and of replacing Cristina's teeth.

"There were decisions that had to be made fast, and together we tried to make them with that mutual love which makes the presence of Jesus possible among us.[2] Later on our doctor told us that he had been impressed by the atmosphere of harmony that existed between us. He had seen many families in similar emergencies, he said, but he had never seen any with the peace that we had."

Cristina is fine now. Except for a band-aid or two and two teeth which are missing, one would never guess that her parents had passed through such a harrowing experience. I was told, in fact, that two days later she was jumping around again just as before. It was her parents who needed a week to recover!

While Gail excused herself in order to put the children to bed, Carlos and I moved to the living room. On the coffee table I noticed several issues of Living City. I asked him what the Focolare Movement meant for him. "When I was sixteen — Carlos started — I felt that I needed to deepen my knowledge of Christianity and the conclusion I reached was that the only thing that could transform the world making it a better place to live in, was love. How to bring it about I didn't know. You can understand now what meeting the Movement nine years ago meant to me. It meant a lot.

"I became a Gen, and my life went from discovery to discovery. The first one was that what matters is to do the will of God in each present moment. It was a revelation to me because I really liked to plan for the future and I always programmed everything. I also discovered Mary, and I understood a little how to live following her footsteps. But above all, what made me change my life decisively was the big discovery that through the love for Jesus Forsaken[3] suffering can be transformed into love. I have tried to grow and always live in compliance with the whole spirituality of the Focolare, failing many times, but always trying to start again."

Gail joined us in the living room. The children must have been cooperative because she was back in a short time. "We understood the Church and the importance to live for the Church," she concluded, "as branches well attached to the vine. This couldn't be but the logical consequence of a life centered on unity."

"Did you both know the Focolare Movement before getting married?" "It was Carlos who spoke to me about it while we were at the university and still just friends. Soon after I also met the Gen and other members of the Movement. For a while though, I thought, I could live by myself the beautiful things they were saying; and I tried. But the joy I saw in them and which I also experienced the few times I went to the Focolare Center seemed to be fading away. How could I live unity by myself since unity is based on the presence of Jesus among those who love him? So I also decided to become a Gen.

"When I became engaged to Carlos, logically we continued being Gen. Jesus was still the one who had the first place in our life. He guided us throughout our engagement and helped us to go against the current, avoiding those things that were against morals, because we wanted to be coherent with our Christian faith. The lines were there and we knew what to do and not do to keep our purity and try to imitate Mary. It was a beautiful engagement.

"We had learned to see all the things we could do without in our lives in order to share with others who have less. As Gen we had both given what we could for the com mon projects of the Gen Movement, "Operation Africa,"[4] for instance. So our dream was a wedding where we didn't spend a lot of money on clothes and the reception."

"We would have preferred the guitars of the Gen to the best organist in town," Carlos interrupted. "Besides that, we thought that such a wedding would help us to be more recollected and mindful of the Sacrament we were to receive. Our dream remained an impossible dream. Our families tried to be nice but it was too hard for them to renounce all the life long plans they had made for us. Each day brought a new concession on our and their part. We arranged the ceremony and they took care of the arrangements for the reception. Loving was more important than holding onto our ideas. "And so, this is how we ended up," Carlos said, laughing as he took from a shelf the wedding pictures. Sipping our coffee we went through the album. Yes, to all appearances it was a wedding like many others: gowns, flowers, reception, but the faces of Gail and Carlos belied the meaning that it had for them. They seemed to have gone into the Sacrament of matrimony determined to see the

unity that they had built up to that moment grow always stronger. Of course to attain this they would have to work hard. Gail shared one of their first experiences after the wedding.

"After we had been married for a week, we could already tell that all was not rosy. I'll give you a small example. One day Carlos wanted to go out and buy a new coat and so we went shopping together. It was the first time, and I was looking forward to helping him pick something out which was attractive, modern, and according to what I thought would look nice on him. However, it was a chance for Carlos to exercise his own taste and get something which he wanted. So we entered the store, and both started to look. I found a coat which I thought was perfect for him, the right size, stylish, and I was sure he would like it. I called him over to try it on. He looked at it and didn't like it at all. Then he brought one over to show me. I thought it was very old-fashioned, but Carlos said, 'It's either this one I found, or nothing at all.' "

Carlos interrupted: "Wasn't I terrible?"

"I really became upset," Gail continued," I thought,'Well, now that we're married, at least he could respect my taste.' (I thought that I had better taste in clothing). So I really blew up, 'I don't want you to buy that coat, your old one is better.' We went home that night and we didn't talk. This went on until the next day."

"She slept on the couch that night," confessed Carlos. "This was our first major argument. When I woke up the next morning, she asked me if I had slept well. I answered 'Yes, very well,' and with that I left."

"I can add that instead I did not sleep that night," Gail went on. "I really had no peace inside, I couldn't concentrate on what I was doing. It was a day of hell. Everything seemed to have lost its meaning. That little incident had grown out of proportion to the point that I asked myself, 'Why did I get married? We're so different! When I sat down that afternoon to try to recollect myself, I couldn't even do that. My rapport with Jesus was gone. In that moment I understood my mistake: I had stopped loving Jesus in my neighbor, which in this case was my husband. After this change of heart done sincerely out of love for Jesus, I felt at peace again."

Carlos and Cristina (age 4)

"Together we try to make decisions with that mutual love which makes the presence of Jesus possible among us." (Carlos)

"I want to love Jesus in your heart, Mommy." (Cristina)

"We had learned to see all the things we could do without in our lives in order to share with others who have less." (Gail)

Gail and John (age 1)

Photos Lucille Michaud

"What did you do, Carlos?" I asked.

He replied, "I didn't know how to express in words that I too was sorry so I invited Gail to come with me to the store. We bought the coat she liked and you know that I ended up liking it so much that I was sorry when it got worn out.

"We had a lot to learn about each other. For instance, I like to get to places early whereas Gail likes to arrive just on time. In those first months, Gail was in her last year at the university and I had just started teaching math. I used to drop her off each morning. Just to get her to hurry up I would, at times, hover around like a bothersome fly. When that happened my whole day would be ruined because not having loved Gail or done anything to re-establish unity made me so uneasy that I wasn't able to love the students either and put up with the rowdy characters. Then as our efforts to grow in unity matured, I understood how simple it was to solve that problem. I started helping in the morning, putting the house in order so that we could leave together without either of us having to rush."

*

I realized how fast it had gotten late after my pleasant evening at the Freires. I got up and put in my purse the precious gift Cristina had prepared for me to take to all the other Gen: a drawing with many crooked circles and colored lines. In a corner, attached with scotch tape, was a little dime: her surplus. Cristina, too, has started to share and not only with her little brother. This showed another precious element of this family: Gail and Carlos, just as when they were Gen, still have the whole world in their hearts and teach that also to their children. With their life, their simple experiences, they told me that there is one who enlarges the horizon of this little household: Jesus they try to keep in their midst at any cost. ■

1) Gen stands for "New Generation," the young people of the Focolare Movement. Our readers are mostly familiar with the Gen 2 (teen-ager and up) and the Gen 3 (children from 7 to 13). Next to them there is also a fourth generation, the so-called Gen 4 (3 to 6). Cristina is a Gen 4.
2) cf. Mt. 18,20.
3) Refers to the suffering of Jesus on the cross when he cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
4) For more than 13 years the Focolare Movement has been developing a Center in Fontem in West Cameroon, Africa. Together with the Bangwa tribe, living in that region, the Focolare started to build a new city. For years it has been a project of the Gen to help their brothers and sisters of Fontem.

Chiara Lubich received by the Holy Father

On Friday, January 11, the Holy Father received Miss Chiara Lubich, foundress and president of the Focolare Movement, in a private audience. For an hour and fifteen minutes, during lunch, in a very cordial atmosphere, the Pope asked to be informed in detail about the latest developments of the Movement and about its various aspects. He was particularly pleased to hear about the ecumenical activities of the Focolare and expressed his satisfaction and trust in the work of the Movement.

Present at the audience were also Miss Eli Folonari, personal secretary of Chiara Lubich, Miss Gisella Calliari and Mister Oreste Basso, for the focolarini and focolarine respectively.

News of the audience was carried in the January 12th issue of the Osservatore Romano and a photo in the January 15th issue.

EXPERIENCES

The following are experiences that some of our readers shared with us in living the Gospel.

MY LITTLE CHEERLEADER

For the past month my daughter had been practicing cheers in the house, in the yard or in the garage — anywhere she could find people to watch and hear her. The entire family had grown tired of it after the first week but she was determined to keep practicing because she wanted to try out for cheerleader. The last week was almost unbearable. She would ask her sisters for their opinions, or to just watch her and they would make up excuses as to why they didn't have time. I'll have to admit, even I pulled that one.

On the day before the tryouts, she walked around the house quietly doing her cheers not asking anyone to watch. By now she had gotten the message! I was trying to type one of my daughter's theme papers, which is a struggle for me anyway, and I could see my little "cheerleader" going through the motions to the side of me. Finally she asked me, "Mom, could you watch me just once?" My first thought was to say "later", and then I thought, "If Jesus was standing there asking me to watch him, wouldn't I do it?" I told her with a real happy face and enthusiastic expression, "Yes!" She said, "You will? You're the first person who has said that. Thanks Mom!" I watched with all the attention I would give Jesus if I could have seen him personally. She was so happy.

She left and I went back to the typewriter. About two minutes later, she came back and said, "Excuse me, Mom, but I was tired and didn't do my best before, would you watch me again?" I would have lost all my joy had I said no to her. So it was to watch her again and to remember to really love is "to love to the end."

M.K.

A NEW ASSIGNMENT

Last fall I began a new assignment at work. My employer had been given a new contract, and I was to take the responsibility for completing one area of the job.

Our first meeting with the people from our customer's company left me a little apprehensive. Mr. S., our principal contact person, was a man who gave the impression of being loud, opinionated, and over-bearing. During the course of the meeting, I realized that he and my employer were friends of long standing, and there was a certain amount of kidding on between them, such as clever insults which are to be appreciated for their wit, but not to be taken seriously. Mr. S. also made it clear that he was sure that he and I could get along very well together. But because of his manner, I wasn't at all sure that he would be happy working with me, within a relationship which might not be what he had in mind.

After a few weeks my employer and I met with Mr. S. again, and I found myself having to make a strong effort to try to love him as a brother. I was the only woman directly involved with this phase of the job, and Mr. S. appeared to be putting on a show, demonstrating how witty and worldly he could be. He finished the session by telling a rather tasteless joke possibly to see my reaction.

After this meeting, the word of life helped me to keep on the right track. I was really somewhat at a loss. But the words, "Not my will but yours be done" made me realize that I could not react to this man by getting upset, or by giving up, or even remembering any of my fears when we would meet the next time.

As the weeks went by and we began working closely together, I tried each day to love this man as God loves him. Although there were times when he became very angry and really insulting to some of the sales people working under him, Mr. S. continued to tell me that he thought I was intelligent and sensible. Each time I would shrink a little inside. Besides feeling the pain of the person he had yelled at, I found myself wondering what would happen when the day came that he thought I'd done something really stupid. These thoughts too had to be put out of my mind in order to be able to try to love as God loves.

One day I noticed that it had been some time since one of Mr. S.'s jokes or stories or comments had made me feel uneasy. This realization made me very happy, and again the word of life reminded me that in order to love as God loves, I had to rejoice as he must rejoice over Mr. S.'s victories, rather than to assume any kind of personal credit. This month's word of life tells us to let our light shine so that people can see the good works we do and give praise to our Father in heaven.[1]

Several days later it seemed as though Mr. S. had noticed the same thing, and he pointed out to me that, in case I hadn't noticed, he had "cleaned up his act considerably" since I'd been around.

Something else I've noticed is that, although Mr. S. still has his flares of temper when he insults some of his fellow-workers, it doesn't seem to happen as often.

On some rare occasions, Mr. S. has shared something of his philosophy of life. So far he hasn't asked me anything of mine; maybe he never will! But it isn't necessary for me to say much, if I can live in such a way that my light will truly shine forth, because in that event, sooner or later, Mr. S. will recognize something of God in his life.

N.L.

A BRUSH WITH GOD

Not too long ago I entered a small shoe store to look for a pair of inexpensive moccasins suitable for wearing in the rain. I had only twelve dollars in my pocket, but since all the shoes had been drastically reduced, I was hopeful that I would find a bargain.

After browsing a short while, I found a pair priced $10.00. They were a little bit tight, but the young congenial salesman and I decided that I could easily stretch them inasmuch as the leather was very soft.

He seemed pleased that I could use the last pair of that style, and I was thrilled at having found such a bargain in genuine leather.

I handed him two fives and a one-dollar bill and he walked to a room in the rear to wrap the shoes and record the sale.

Shortly afterwards he returned with the shoes neatly wrapped. He appeared very nervous as he handed me the package, a one-dollar bill and a five.

"Miss, you made a mistake," he said. "You gave me only one five and one single." Remembering that I had counted two fives and two singles before getting off the bus and again before I handed him the eleven dollars and returned the other single to my bag, I replied that I couldn't have made a mistake. I explained that I had counted out the exact amount to give to him and had returned my last dollar to my bag.

Shifting his eyes and speaking nervously, he answered, "Oh yes, you made a mistake. You'd better look in your bag for the other five." He left me with the package and the $6.00, turned and walked quickly to the back room.

I had become very nervous, but gained enough composure to open my bag again. There was no money there except the one-dollar bill. My change was in my raincoat pocket.

For a few seconds I remembered how his manner had changed and how upset he had become, and then I began to wonder why he had chosen to cheat "me." In the store there were many other people, most of whom seemed to have been using credit cards. Perhaps he needed cash for some personal reason I thought. I felt sick.

It came to my mind, however, that I had to concentrate on loving him no matter what, for he was my brother and I could not judge him.

I understood that my love for him had to be spontaneous and disinterested. The only way to do it, it seemed to me at that point was to sacrifice the five dollars not to expose him before all those people in the store.

My decision cost me such an effort that it seemed like ages before he returned.

Finally he came. He spoke in a low voice, asking, "Well did you find it?"

I answered in a whisper, "No, I don't have another five, so I won't be able to buy the shoes, but I do thank you very much for helping me select them."

I hurriedly left the store, fighting back the tears all the way to the bus stop. I kept telling myself that I could not cry. I had done all I could think of in that moment to love him, and — I thought — I could always pray for him in the future.

As the red light changed and I stepped down into the street to cross to the bus stop, I heard someone calling, "Miss, Miss."

I turned around and there was the same young man. He offered me the five dollar bill crushed in his hand. We almost embraced. I was so happy and so was he.

I found myself telling him, "I knew you would come. I'm so happy that you came."

He stammered, "Oh, I don't know why . . . maybe I dropped it or . . . ." He seemed unsure of a good explanation. "Oh, I'm so glad I came."

Returning to the store with him, I told him how he had renewed my faith in humanity and how happy I was for him. Like me he was beaming as he kept repeating, "I'm glad I came. Yes, you are right, we have to have faith in humanity."

Then he confided in me that he was ashamed to re-enter the store.

"Oh, it's all right," I exclaimed. "Don't worry. The only thing that matters is that you came."

We entered the store together, our faces shining happily. Everybody looked. The manager asked what had happened. My friend said weakly, "Oh nothing, just a little mistake."

As I left the store, we joyously thanked each other again. His eyes seemed so pure. He too must have known. We'd had a brush with God.

ANA

"I entered a small shoe store. . ."

The apex of Christian living

by IGINO GIORDANI

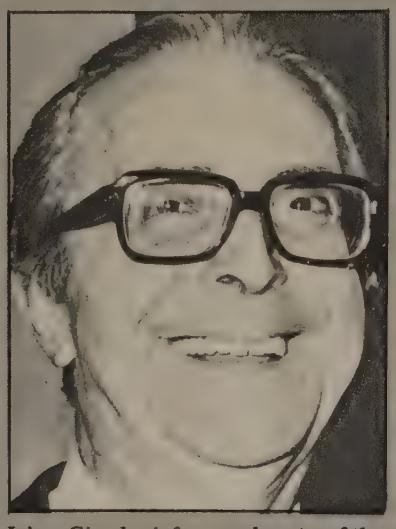
The famous psychologist Jung, in his "Introduction to the Religious Problem" strongly deplores the way Christians have neglected their faith through the centuries. He says their religion has survived as a form of paganism rather than the religion of the Gospel. To quote him: — "This comes from a psychic condition which has remained archaic, and which, in fact, never had its roots in true christianity." In other words, Jung is saying that the Gospel for the majority of Christians, has never become an interior faith — the life of the soul. "Too few of them have lived as if the divine image was the intimate property of their own souls. Most of them have only met Christ from the outside."

The soul is released from sin and death by redemption, which raises it from mediocrity until it is itself one with God — until it is as St. Paul says "In Christ." Is this a true picture of a Christian? Not according to Jung! His view may offer some element of truth, but on the whole it is an exaggerated one.

In every century there have been many great souls and numerous Christians who have lived the Gospel, even though their faith may have been restricted by the limitations of their period and of their own mentality. Think of St. Francis for instance. Had he not lived the Gospel in the interior life of his soul, it would not have become the sole reason of his being — his life.

Here, with the multitude of believers of every age, we can include the hermits, who retreated to the mountains, and the crusaders, who went off to kill and die in the Holy Land. Their behavior, in its dedication and good faith, bears witness to something to which very little attention is given: — the development of the Christian conscience in humanity.

In former times there have been great spiritual leaders teaching souls how to make the Divine an interior reality, to the point of union with Christ. To name but a few we have had a Paul, a John, an Augustine, a Bernard, a Francis, a Clare, a Catherine of Siena, a Teresa of Avila, and so on. We could continue up to a Pascal, to a Newman, a Rosmini, a Don Bosco, a Cabrini.



Igino Giordani, former deputy of the Italian Parliament, a prolific writer, was the first Italian journalist to write about ecumenism, as far back as 1927.

Recently we have also had the revelation of the Second Vatican Council, which has gathered together and expressed its profound hopes and desires for this Jesus/Life, with its powerful reaction against the 'Death of God' ideology which extinguishes the interior life of man.

In Italy, there was until the first world war a kind of festival liturgy, a type of folklore, which farmers and workers attended because it was linked with various events in their regions. There still remains among some aristocratic groups a nostalgia for elaborate religious functions, with flags and halberds etc. the lack of which has been lamented by the traditionalists, who justify their lament by our present day "lack of pomp" in religious ceremonies — "pomp," not the cross! In the present period of human development, when so many bishops, clergy and religious in many poor countries are suffering and struggling to regain some liberty of spirit, to overcome social and moral degradation, often against atrocious dictatorships, all that type of nostalgia seems to be an out-of-date vanity of an old fashioned mentality, which has faded through God's grace, in the face of a growing concern in the Church for the poor and the simple. It seems to me, that our age offers some progress in respect of the judgment of Jung.

In Jung's period his criticism was shared by other observers, and I quote a statement by Gandhi: — "I came to know the Bible about forty-five years ago. I was not very interested in the Old Testament, but when I came to the New Testament and the Sermon on the Mount it brought back something I had learned in my youth — not to take revenge, or return evil for evil.

"Of all the things that I read, this remained with me; that Jesus came to establish a new law. To be sure he said he had not come to bring a different law, but to make a graft onto the old law of Moses, thus changing it to become a new law. No longer an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; but people who were ready to receive two blows when they had been given one, and to go two miles when asked to go one.

"I said to myself, 'This is not Christianity for sure,' since the image I had had up to then, was the freedom to have a bottle of whisky in one hand and a thick steak in the other. But the Sermon on the Mount showed me my mistake. Gradually, as I came into contact with real Christians, people living for God, I saw that the Sermon on the Mount contained the whole of Christianity for whoever wished to live a Christian life.

"This discourse gave me a love for Jesus. On reading the story of his life in this light, it seemed to me that Christianity has yet to be realized. In fact, although we sing

'Glory to God in the highest, and peace to men on earth,' today there is neither glory given to God, nor is there peace on earth.

"While this remains an unsatisfied hunger, and until we have eliminated violence from our civilization, Christ has yet to be born. When true peace is established we shall have no need of proofs — they will shine forth from our lives, not only individually, but collectively.

"It was the Sermon on the Mount which revealed to me the value of passive resistance. I was filled with joy when I read: — 'Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you'" (Gandhi).

Today, the religious life of Christians is characterized by their striving to place love at the apex of their endeavor, through faith centered in God/Love. It is a striving which brings a growth of faith within ourselves.

Many young people have realized that by immersing themselves in God, and by placing the Holy Spirit at the center of the Temple — the human body, as St. Paul teaches — (or, if you prefer, for God to immerse himself in us, transforming ourselves into his likeness within our souls), they have understood that human behavior can become identified with Christian living, so that our daily existence results in an elevation to the greatness of God, through which we establish the Trinity in man.

To this end, to regain, at least partially, the greatness for which man was created, there is demanded from the believer a determination to free the Temple from all its paraphernalia of sub-human degradation, of pseudo-spirituality; to tear up outside the gate all the litter of pride, of idealistic fixation, of sensual abuse. It asks for a free decision from man to renounce self-in dulgence, avarice and selfishness.

This often seems, and is, hard. For it pre-supposes an effort to simplify one's life; to remove all the structures of greed and stupidity through which man under the influence of mass media and advertising, is at times reduced to the level of an animal dressed in the latest fashion. *(continued on page 28)*

There is a place for you at the 1980 MARIAPOLIS

The Mariapolises are the largest and most typical gatherings sponsored by the Focolare Movement. They are intended to be a deep experience of unity. They take place every summer in many countries all over the world. In 1979, seventy-seven Mariapolises were held with the total participation of over 80,000 people.

Three Mariapolises will be held in North America next summer. You are invited!

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
New Mexico Highlands University
Las Vegas, New Mexico

June 22, after supper — June 28, after breakfast

NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
St. Martin's College
Lacey, Washington

July 20, after supper — July 26, after breakfast

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS
Alfred University
Alfred, N.Y.

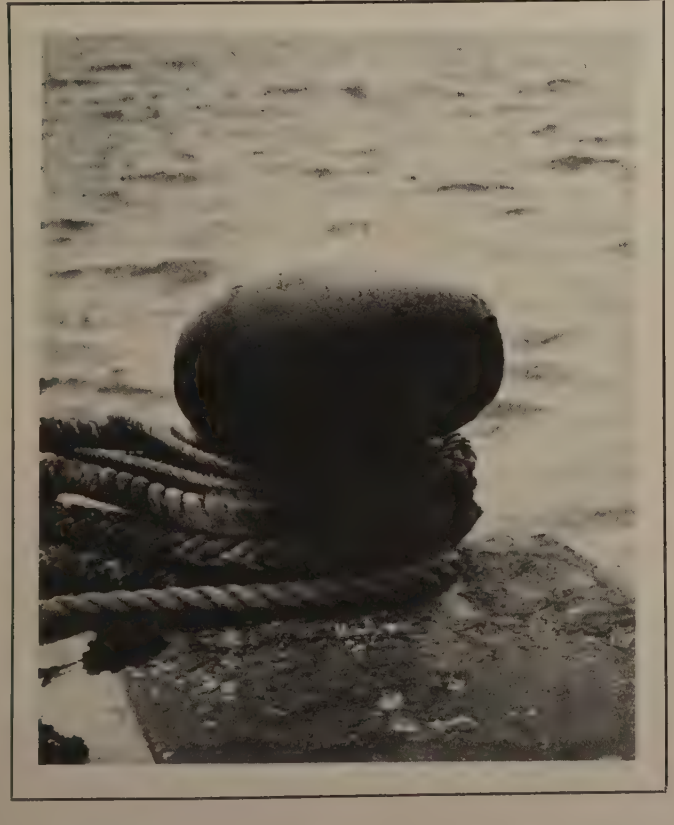
August 3, after supper — August 9, after breakfast

PROFILES

THIRST FOR MARTYRDOM

by SERGIO C. LORIT

It is possible that the inhabitants of Coimbra, "the splendid," took these barefoot friars for scarecrows. They first descended upon the city, with their hairy faces but bald heads, their nondescript grayish sack cloths girded by a rope with a knot here and there — a handful of friars, always cheerful, always praying as they walked through the streets. They then climbed the hill to Monte Olivares where, with a few bricks and plenty of brushwood, they built themselves a few huts among the olive trees and a little church in the middle.



PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF ST. ANTHONY'S GUILD

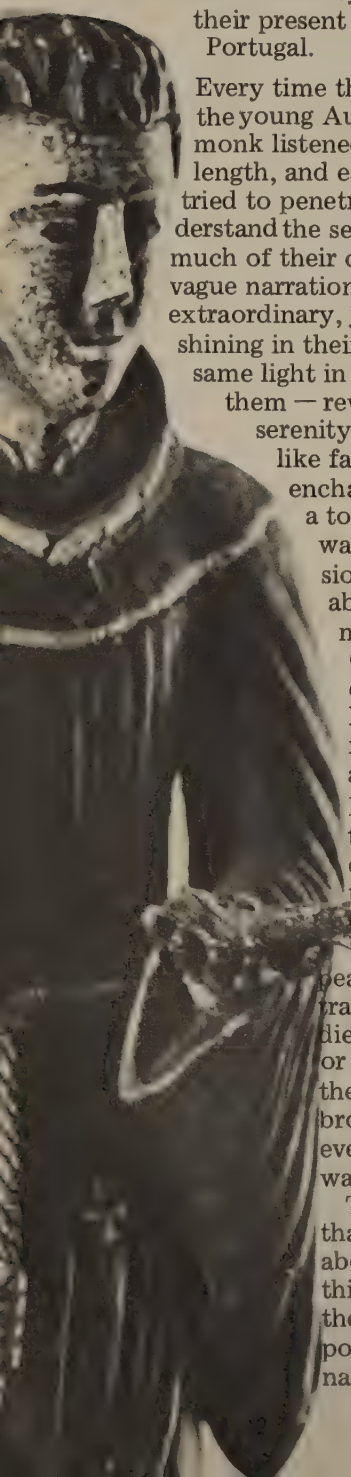
Eventually Coimbra got used to them. For, once in a while, they would leave their refuge entrusted to the protection of St. Anthony, the hermit, and come down to the city, to talk to the people rather than to preach, and also to beg — and whether they were given bread or scorn, they always answered with a big smile, radiating perfect happiness, from behind those incredibly unkempt beards of theirs. "Peace and goodness" was their wish to those who gave, "Peace and goodness" to those who did not. And in both cases their eyes said that it was true peace and true goodness their childlike hearts were wishing to all and everyone.

At times they left their hermitage to knock at the door of the Abbey of Santa Cruz. The abbey of Santa Cruz was the splendid monastery of the monks of St. Augustine. Its sumptuous church harbored the tombs of the kings of Portugal. Its silent, awe-inspiring libraries welcomed the best minds of the country and its wide-porticoed cloisters surrounded enchanted gardens with a dazzling array of flowers and the refreshing sound of gushing fountains.

At first the visits were brief: a greeting "Praise be to Jesus Christ," a piece of bread slipped into a bag, and a return greeting "Praise to him, forever." The abbey had provided alms, the matter was concluded. But, there was someone at the abbey who showed some interest for the uncouth foreign penitents in their ash-colored tunics. It was a young monk, not much over twenty, tall, loose-limbed but strong, a handsome young man of aristocratic mien, manly and delicate at the same time. He wore a white tunic and black-hooded cape with the same natural elegance as if he were sporting full armor and helmet. He did not say much, he would rather let the friars speak, but the little he did say revealed great wisdom and immense knowledge.

As to the poor friars, they were as devoid of eloquence and elegance of speech as they were plain in their attire and neglected in appearance. Their simplicity moved one to tenderness and yet, there was something more in these poor penitents who barely knew more than the

rudiments of catechism: their limpid eyes radiated the joy of paradise. There was something moving and fascinating about them, especially when they spoke of Francis of Assisi in far away Umbria, and of the great revolution that, united, they had started together. It was a revolution of penance and peace, which had spread with miraculous speed throughout Italy and beyond. And they also spoke of how, at a general Chapter the year before (1217), Brother Francis had organized the order into provinces, leading them, then, to take to the road until they reached their present destination, Portugal.



Every time they spoke, the young Augustinian monk listened to them at length, and each time he tried to penetrate and understand the secret not so much of their clumsy, often vague narration, as of the extraordinary, joyous light shining in their eyes — the same light in everyone of them — revealing the serenity of a child-like faith and the enchantment of a total love. It was a love, passionate and pure, abiding in their midst and in Christ. Because of this love, Christ reigned among them. It was a love that embraced each neighbor they met on their road of penance and peace, be he a traveler or a soldier, a courtier or serf — for them all were brothers and every brother was Christ.

The notion that this love above every-thing else, was the secret to the powerful fascination radiating from the poor, shabby and unlearned friars of Monte Olivares was confirmed the following year, in 1219, when another small group of friars from Italy passed through Coimbra. They were Berardo, Pietro, Ottone, Accursio and Adiuto. In their eyes too, the Augustinian monk could read the same light and learn the same answer — it was crystalline faith and love, above all, love. It was the same love for God and for his children that was guiding the five Franciscans who were passing through Portugal and stopping briefly at the Monte Olivares hermitage on their way to the infidel land of Morocco. Rich only of absolute poverty, equipped with no doctrine, they went to preach Christ's Gospel to the "Saracen brothers", as Brother Francis had decreed that same year of 1219, ordering his friars to spread out into the wide world, to every corner of the earth, even to the most remote corners held by the infidels. As he listened to them, the young Augustinian learned something more. He learned of the friars' thirst for martyrdom. It was in that moment that he began to feel the anguish of doubt in his heart — the doubt whether his way of life sheltered within the massive walls of that sumptuous abbey, studying in the solemn, undisturbed silence of its libraries which not even the gently splashing waters of the enchanted garden could reach, was truly his way to the spiritual perfection he had dreamed of as a child, the ideal for which he had left his father's palace for the monastery and his native city, Lisbon for Coimbra.

This young monk of St. Augustine bore a high sounding name. He was Fernando de Bulhões, first born son of Don Martin Vicêncio, a knight of King Alphonse and a descendant, it appears, of that fearless warrior of the first crusade and king of Jerusalem, Godfrey of Bouillon.

It was twenty-four years before (seven hundred and eighty-five years ago) that Fernando was born in Lisbon in the noble palace of the Bulhões, only a few steps from the cathedral of Santa Marie de Assunção. The day was August 15, 1195 and the first cries of the baby mingled with the festive pealing of bells from the church tower calling the people to sing the praises of Our Lady of the Assumption.

While carrying her first child during the long and frequent periods her husband, engaged in battle, left her alone, Donna Marie Terese Taveira often came to the huge, solemn cathedral to pray before the venerated image of Our Lady, and offer her first maternity to her. She interpreted the happy coincidence of Fernando's birth and the feast of the Assumption to mean that her child would be particularly loved and protected by the Mother of God.

Such was the conviction of the father as well, Don Martin Vicêncio, who, although more familiar with the practices of war than with those of piety, was a religious man in his own way. Notwithstanding such feelings both Don Martin Vicêncio and Donna Maria Terese shared the certainty that their son would grow up in the love of God and the care of the Virgin, but strictly within the aristocratic and martial tradition of the Bulhões. As recorded in the family chronicles from time immemorial, they destined their first-born to a military career, as a valiant knight in the service of the King of Portugal.

Portugal, in those days, was marked as the last strip of land on the map. With the exception of some already ostentatiously wealthy centers, it was considered the farthest slum area of the known world, hanging onto the Iberian peninsula on the angry Atlantic ocean, with its sinister mystery of the unknown beyond.

It hadn't been very long since the old, rather well-to-do district called Lisbon had grown into an important city. Its mild climate, the beauty of its landscape and the fame of the relics of St. Vincent of Saragozza in the ornate cathedral of Santa Maria de Assunção, attracted large crowds of pilgrims as well as a considerable number of refugees who, leaving behind the hardships of the barren countryside, came to this fast growing center to seek fortune and success.

Coimbra was different. Coimbra, the capital, had long been a pearl of

◀ *The cloister of the Augustinian Monastery in Coimbra, Portugal.* **Here Fernando de Bulhões, who entered the Augustinian order at the age of fifteen, began his climb to spiritual perfection. Eight years later he met the followers of St. Francis and joined them with the desire to follow the example of the first five Franciscan martyrs who died in Morocco in 1219. As a Franciscan, he received the name of Brother Anthony.**

Lisbon Harbor. **Brother Anthony sailed by this site on his way to Morocco in 1220. There he became ill and was forced to return home. While at sea, a storm cast him off shipwrecked on the coast of Sicily. His unforeseen itinerary brought him to Asissi to the general chapter called by St. Francis.**
▼

a city, even before the time it became the fabulous seat of the Court of King Alphonse II and Queen Urraca.

It was a time of harsh contrasts, the time in which our story took place; an era which, within the borders of the small kingdom, saw the most absurd wealth of a few and the most desperate hunger of the masses, the most degenerate debauchery and the most austere religious fervor, the wildest orgies and the most patiently endured hardships of pilgrimage, the greatest excesses of greed and the most selfless generosity, the most bloodthirsty hatred and the most loving forgiveness.

It was in this climate that Fernando grew who, though belonging to the privileged minority, showed from his earliest years a most anguished compassion for others: the poor, to whom he could only give, give, always give everything his mother's generosity made available to him. And yet, he felt it was too little.

Then he reached school age. Education was a big problem in those days, all over Portugal, even for those most privileged by wealth. Fortunately in those very years the Church opened a school in Lisbon, next to the Cathedral where, after the first elementary teachings, the children were instructed in arts and letters with the same diligent care they were taught and formed in the truths of faith.

Fernando went to this Cathedral school and it was in those years — as he went straight from the noisy classrooms to the austere silence of the old cathedral to attend the solemn functions together with his schoolmates in clerical garb — that he began to feel an uncertain undefinable feeling. It almost seemed to be a calling from the saint of Saragozza, whose story of atrocious martyrdom at Valenza Fernando had heard about.

But this uncertain feeling was only a small flame, a tiny spark soon to be extinguished, at least for a few years, right after the final school year at the Cathedral school. At this point, we must ask the authors of the often sugary biographies of our hero to forgive us if we will not follow them any further in picturing him going from school to monastery and beyond, externally with a lily in his hand in an aura of a rarified and unreal attitude of remorse.

No, Fernando de Bulhões did not, as was written about him, leave the classrooms next to Santa Maria de Assunção to go straight to the door of the São Vicente de Fora monastery at the first signs of bewilderment because of the seductions of the world. It was not so.

When he was finished with school he did what any first born scion of such noble birth would do, especially when gifted as he was with a sharp mind and provided with quick reflexes and muscles of steel. He turned to arms and started a military career. At a certain point, however, he found himself ruthlessly immersed in a world that was corrupt, albeit exciting.

He did not yield to it, to be sure, but neither did he try to escape it. He fought it. For this was, and would be as long as he lived, his natural characteristic temperament: the temperament of the fighter who takes life by storm even exposing himself to danger. He struggled for years — heart-rending battles between conviction and practice. This was the true, authentic Fernando de Bulhões, a man of flesh and blood who, carrying his burden of defects and shortcomings, at times, of guilt and failure, like everybody else, became what he became solely through a tireless battle against all that is tarnished and degenerate in us.

It was only later that, amidst the consternation of his father and the understanding of his mother, he ventured, outside of the walls of Lisbon, the steep climb up the hills to the Monastery of São Vicente de Fora to seek admission among the ranks of the monks of St. Augustine. We learn this from a faithful chronicler of Fernando, who gathered and recorded all that regarded him until he died. "As he reached the age of marriage and the enticement to corruption grew ever stronger, he refused to give way to his youthful exuberance and pleasure. Thus, he took refuge in the monastery of São Vicente de Fora . . . "[1]

(continued on page 16)

1) Vittorio P. Facchinetti, "Antonio Di Padova: Il Santo Del Popolo," own translation (Genova: Orfanotrofio Femminile Divina Providenza, 1929), p.13.

FORTY DAYS WITHOUT STOPPING

Today in the consumer society the main thing we want to save is time. If we read advertisements and listen to the radio and T.V., we often hear, "instant, ready-made, immediate delivery." Even sculptors and painters now work fast and take shortcuts, whereas in the past, the artist took his time. The changes came fast in our own familiar cities. The field at the city limits has now been transformed into a suburb. In a few months, streets that we walked along for years are turned into highways. Everything is done quickly and efficiently, a lot is prefabricated.

This is even more true in the field of communication. It is possible to reach people far away, saving a lot of travel time. It is impossible even for Christians who are careful and are attracted by the mysteries of the spirit, even for people open to the most sublime things, not to be influenced by this new rhythm that humanity is caught up in, especially where more progress has been reached.

It is outdated to spend hours in solitary contemplation or in long meditation. We prefer to follow short formulas but safe ones, to reach our goal, which in this case is nothing less than our union with God. A sentence attributed to Saint Bonaventure which certainly came from experience, seems to be very much up-to-date. He affirms that a person progresses further along the way of God in forty days *if he never stops*, than in forty years even if he is enclosed in a monastery with every help to be perfect, if he stops every once in awhile in the valley of imperfection and venial sin.

Such a statement should impress us, and put a certain charge of enthusiasm in each one of us. It should make us wonder how we can manage not to stop at imperfections and venial sins. The answer seems obvious, and that is to seek *perfection* constantly. But first we must know what perfection is. We know from Christ, that perfection is in loving, because he who loves does not sin. It is the love of God, which is concretely expressed in the love for our neighbor. If we love our brothers and sisters, we are constantly passing from death to life and this too is the guarantee of our eternal life.

Today the whole world is marching toward a new humanism, (variously expressed in different idealogies) that fascinates crowds and individuals. This makes the Christian imperative of charity seem very modern. The Christian imperative leads to a humanism where one person regards another and where groups regard each other *through the transfiguring lens of the person of Christ.* The Second Vatican Council itself became aware of the new place of man in modern society. The Council reaffirmed that "He (Christ) taught us that the new command of love is the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world's transformation. To those, therefore, who believe in divine love, He gives assurance that the way of love lies open to all men and that the effort to establish a universal brotherhood is not a hopeless one."[1] Pope Paul commenting on this fact said, "The Church tends to give man his right value, to respect him, to give him the awareness of his own greatness. The Church does not humiliate man, but exalts him. The Church does not anesthetize man but wakes him up to a sense of his dignity. The Church never despises him, but appreciates him and loves him, goes towards him, embraces him, giving to him almost her own heart, like Jesus who washed the feet of the apostles, like the saints who were able to embrace the lepers and the sick ones. Charity finds itself in the role to which the Church is called, to lead mankind to its full development ..."[2]

The saints always saw this whole thing very clearly; they reached the peaks of perfection because they loved their neighbor. They wrote of Catherine of Siena, "... but Catherine thought that it was not enough to give what we are asked, it was not enough to listen to those who begged. She began to go and look for the underprivileged. When everybody was sleeping she went and left bread, wine, a little flour and a basket of eggs at their door, the same as St. Nicholas of Bari, and then she would run away so nobody would see her."[3] Saint Theresa of Avila, a contemplative in the highest sense of the word, used to say, "...the Lord needs action. For instance, he doesn't want you to worry about missing that particular devotion in order to console a sick person when you see that you can help her, making her suffering yours, fasting if necessary, to give her something to eat. This is what real union with the will of God is."[4]

You would expect people who were very close to Christianity to have the same vision. What Ghandi said in *As Ancient as the Mountains* is very beautiful: " ... if we love those who love us this is not non-violence. Non-violence is to love those who hate us. I know how difficult it is

to follow this sublime law of love, but aren't all great and good things difficult? Love for our enemies is the most difficult of all. But with the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy if we want to do it..."[5] "... the golden rule is to be friends of the world and to consider mankind as one family. He who makes distinctions between the faithful of his own religion and those of another goes against the members of his own religion and opens the way to refusal and irreligion."[6]

Atheistic ideas have some influence on young and often inexperienced people because they contain a certain love for mankind. For them the "Development of Peoples" encyclical is especially valuable. Yes, we have to reach a humanism but it must be "open toward the absolute."[7] Otherwise, St. Paul admonishes, "It's worth nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3). Paul VI said that the precept of Christian charity contains potential that no philanthropy or sociology could ever reach. And examining our charity, he said that it is still enclosed within the limits set up by customs, interest, selfishness which must be enlarged.[8] It becomes logical that it is urgent *to transform all our relationships*, with our family, colleagues, acquaintances, men and women of the whole world, into Christian relationships. Urged and enlightened by love we must start individual and social works remembering that if we will be rewarded for a glass of water, a hospital, a school, an orphanage, an institute for the re-education of other people (if these are means to express our charity) will prepare us for a brilliant final exam of our life.

Istituto Italiano di Cultura, NY

"The changes came fast in our own familiar cities . . ."

God will tell us,

"I was hungry in your husband, in your children, in the population of India, and as you saw me in them, you fed me.

"I was thirsty, I was naked in your little ones every morning, in your brothers in many nations, where living conditions are inhuman, and you, always seeing me in everyone, have clothed me with what you had.

"I was orphaned, hungry, sick in the children of your neighborhood, as well as in the population of Pakistan overwhelmed by tragedy and menaced by cholera, and you did everything you could to help.

"You put up with your mother-in-law, with your nervous wife and threatening co-workers, or with your employer who is not too understanding, because you are convinced that perfect social justice can only be achieved if it is based on social charity. And you did all this because you have seen me in everyone.

"You visited your relative in prison, you prayed, and helped the best you could those who were oppressed and threatened in the depths of the spirit ..."

Speechless we will then have only one word, "Thank you, thank you God, for opening on earth the most direct way, the shortest for us, to reach our heavenly destination." ■

(Taken from Chiara Lubich, *Sì, Sì, No, No* 1973, in *Scritti Spirituali, Vol. 2,* Città Nuova, Rome, p.147)

1) "Gaudium et Spes," n. 38, The Documents of Vatican II, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J., trans. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher (New York: Guild Press, 1966) p. 236.
2) Insegnamenti Di Paolo VI, own translation, (Città del Vaticano, 1969, VII) p. 731.
3) G. Joergensen, S. Caterina Da Siena, own translation (Torino, 1941), p. 99.
4) S. Teresa Di Gesù, "Castello interiore," in Opere, own translation (Roma, 1967) p. 847.
5) M. K. Gandhi, Antiche Come Le Montagne, own translation (Milano, 1969), p. 120.
6) Ibid., p. 164.
7) Pope Paul VI, "The Progress of Peoples, n. 42.
8) Insegnamenti Di Paolo VI, own translation (Città del Vaticano, 1968, VI), p. 127.

(continued from page 13)

There, clothed in the snow-white robe of the novices, in the solitude of his cell, oblivious to having become the talk of all Lisbon, and to the malicious bets made on his account by his one-time friends, he thought he had finally found the necessary peace to reach the spiritual perfection he had dreamt of, if ever so vaguely, in his childhood.

But it was not to be. The world which he had left behind reached him even in the silence of the cloister, and even as, having ended his novitiate, he became a regular member of the Augustinian order.

There were the continuous visits of friends and relatives, trying to win him back to a life of worldliness, reminding him of the pleasures and the honors he "so inconsiderately" had given up, and flattering him with new promises. For Fernando this was another period of great moral suffering, an added cause of deep torment, until he felt the necessity to ask his superiors to transfer him to another monastery, as far away as possible from Lisbon. His wish was opposed at first. The superiors as well as the other monks of Sao Vicente de Fora were unwilling to lose the monk who, both for his noble birth and his splendid mind, was the pride of their monastery. But in the end they had to give in to his insistent requests and agreed to transfer him to Coimbra, to the superb Abbey of Santa Cruz, to which their monastery belonged.

The years spent at Coimbra were years of intense study and preparation for the priesthood for Fernando de Bulhoes; years of tireless research into the texts of the Old and the New Testaments and the writings of the Church Fathers; years in which his unbreakable will-power, his faultless memory and intelligence made him stand out even on that olympus of superior minds. These were also years of ardent prayer and meditation which helped him scale the ladder toward spiritual perfection.

Then the day came when, as we already mentioned, he met the Franciscan monks from Italy who had set up camp on Monte Olivares and occasionally came down the hill to bring the revolution of penance and peace to the people of Coimbra. Fernando first talked to one, then to the others as they came to knock at the door and beg at Santa Cruz. He felt, by intuition, the secret of so much light under their simplicity and poverty.

When he met brother Berardo and brother Pietro and Ottone, Adiuto and Accursio passing through Portugal on their way to Morocco, he felt again the old flame which had been born in his heart when, still a schoolboy, he had been fascinated by the relics of the Saint of Saragozza. It now flared up anew and burned in him with the same thirst for martyrdom as he had detected in the five wandering, poor Franciscans.

The doubt which had already crept into his soul became more and more agonizing: wasn't this great desire for learning also vanity, nothing but vanity? And wasn't it vanity, this yearning for doctrine which had seduced him up to that moment, even though he had planned to use this doctrine, someday, somewhere in the world, to lay bare the falsehood of heresies and clear the minds of the infidels?

"Oh, if Almighty God would grant me to share the death of these holy martyrs! . . . Dare I think that this day will come?. Dare I believe that this joy will be granted to me?"

St. Anthony

These poor foreigners who had come barefoot all the way from Italy, clad in their rough, thread-bare cloth with a knotted rope around their waist, undaunted in spite of their littleness, conscious of their ignorance yet fully secure in their trust in God, had humbly taken the road to faraway lands without any schooling, and, above all, without any hesitation. Their only strength lay in that true brotherly charity which Fernando had seen in the joyous light of their eyes and which he found fascinating.

His soul was tormented by great anguish and even while he went on with his deep intellectual preparation in the libraries of the splendid abbey of Santa Cruz, his heart was already up there with the poor Franciscans in their shabby huts on Monte Olivares. His spirit wandered off to the highways of Morocco to follow that small band of brothers already consigned to death. He prayed now everyday beseeching Jesus and the Blessed Virgin to show him the way to join those poor brothers.

Then, one day, the tragic news came from Africa. On January 16, 1220, after incredible torture, the five Franciscans were decapitated in the main square of Morocco's

Right: Letter of St. Francis to St. Anthony. **This letter marked a turning point in the history of the Franciscans. Anthony became the first teacher of theology in the Order.**

The original cloister of the Franciscan Friary at Padua, Italy. **Here Anthony, whose name remained inseparably linked to that of the city, walked and prayed in the last period of his life. He had wished to die as a martyr and became instead a captivating preacher. The crowds of his listeners were so great that no church could contain them.**

"TO BROTHER ANTHONY,
MY BISHOP,
I BROTHER FRANCIS
SEND GREETINGS.
IT PLEASES ME THAT YOU
SHOULD TEACH THE FRIARS
SACRED THEOLOGY,
PROVIDED THAT
IN SUCH STUDIES THEY
DO NOT DESTROY
THE SPIRIT OF HOLY PRAYER
AND DEVOTEDNESS
AS IS CONTAINED
IN THE RULE.
FAREWELL."

Tower of Count Tiso's castle in Camposanpiero, near Padua. **In the park surrounding this castle stood the famous walnut tree on which a hut was built for Brother Anthony, as a sort of hermitage. There, after the fruitful but exhausting Lenten season of 1231, he spent some time in solitude and prayer, preparing to meet "Sister Death."**

capital by five scimitar-wielding infidels. Those five monks who had tried to imitate Christ in his charity and poverty, had now succeeded in imitating him in his excruciating martyrdom as well. "Now I can say that I truly have five Franciscans,"[2] said brother Francis of Assisi when he learned the news.

All of Portugal was seized by shock and horror. Don Pedro, brother of the king, took it upon himself to save the martyrs' relics from profanation by the Saracens and had them brought to Coimbra to be buried and venerated in the church of the Abbey of Santa Cruz, among the tombs of the kings. It was King Alphonse II himself, with Queen Urraca, who headed the greatest cortege of knights and dignitaries, prelates and noblemen, that ever stepped in great solemnity outside the walls of the capital to meet those holy relics and escort them into the sanctuary amidst overflowing crowds of people from all over the country.

Waiting silently at the door of the abbey were the monks of St. Augustine, among them Fernando de Bulhoes. At the moment the poor remains of the five Franciscan proto martyrs crossed that threshhold, he knew with absolute certainty that he would divest himself of the white tunic and wear the rough, grey habit of the Franciscans.

In the following days Fernando could hardly wait that some of the poor friars would come down to beg at the abbey. When they finally knocked at the door he was there waiting for them and took them aside.

He told them that he had decided he wanted to be one of them.

The poor friars couldn't get it into their heads at first, that one of the most illustrious among these learned Augustinians should prefer their miserable huts of brushwood over the elegant porticoes of the abbey and their bare little church over the royal splendor of Santa Cruz. But they accepted it in gladness as an unexpected gift of God's mercy and said that they could see no obstacle to his wish as far as they were concerned, provided he would join the followers of brother Francis of Assisi in humility and live according to his example with no hesitations, no regrets and no conditions.

But Fernando de Bulhoes had a very specific condition. He then explained that it was not only love for penance that made him want to wear the Franciscan habit but also, and above all, a desire to leave as soon as possible for Morocco, to the very place where brothers Berardo, Petro, Ottone, Adiuto and Accursio had been decapitated, and there to embark on the same divine adventure for the triumph of the cross among the infidels.

The little brothers of Monte Olivares felt this condition to be quite acceptable, since Brother Francis had opened all the roads of the world to his friars and had decided himself to venture the way to the Orient.

They took leave from one another, with the friars of Monte Olivares promising to come back soon bringing a Franciscan habit for Fernando. Fernando was to seek, in the meantime, to obtain his prior's permission. The prior, needless to say, was literally dumbstruck by Fernando's request. When after gasping for a while, unable to utter a word, he finally regained his breath, he tried all the means of persuasion at his command to make Fernando give up his idea. When all means failed, the prior broke down in tears, sobbing like a child. But nothing could sway the iron determination of the young monk and in the end the prior himself came to accept it as the will of God. He finally gave his permission and the two embraced with mixed emotions of joy and deep sorrow.

For the first time in its long history, the abbey of Santa Cruz learned the meaning of the word "commotion" as the news spread along corridors and porticoes penetrating into each single cell. Words of sincere regret and expressions of amazement and surprise were mingled with sharp criticism and blame for so strange, not to say foolish a decision. Many wondered

2) Facchinetti, "Antonio Di Padova," p.28.

how it could be possible after so many years of study both at Lisbon and at Coimbra, that one of them should hold learning and doctrine in so low esteem as to want to join those simple souls who believe they can renew the world by returning to the simplicity of the first followers of Our Lord.

They thought that those times were long gone, as unfortunately, even their colleague who was leaving them would realize one day, to his own regret. They thought it wouldn't be very long, when they'd see him show up again cured for good, of his incredible infatuation.

In the meantime, however, Fernando de Bulhões was waiting for the friars of Monte Olivares, and the time seemed never to pass. Then finally, they came, three of them, one with a bundle under his arm with the grey habit and cord. They were admitted to the church of Santa Cruz where Fernando, surrounded by all the Augustinian monks of the abbey was concentrated in deep prayer.

The ceremony was brief, and without solemnity. Fernando took off his black-hooded cape and the white tunic which he handed over to the prior kneeling reverently before him. Then he took off his shoes and barefooted, went to kneel down before the oldest of the three Franciscan friars, who clothed him with the ash colored habit and handed him the cord to gird himself with. That was all. Now, for the first time the face of Fernando de Bulhoes lit up with the same joy that he had seen in the eyes of all those humble monks of St. Francis.

At the door of the abbey, before leaving it behind forever, he turned once more to the prior, asking for his blessing. Deeply moved, the prior gave him his blessing and then held him to his heart. It was at that moment that a voice was heard among the group of Augustinians, saying ironically:"Go, go! You will doubtless become a saint." "When you hear that I am a saint," replied the newly born Franciscan friar, "give glory to God."[3]It was as though he were saying everything is possible to God, so even this can happen.

The delicate, white bare feet of Fernando de Bulhões made their first acquaintance with the rough, steep and rocky road leading up to the half-hidden hermitage among the olive trees. It was there, in front of the tiny church surrounded by the poor huts that the three friars called Fernando de Bulhões by his new name of Brother Anthony, in honor of St. Anthony the hermit, patron saint of their hermitage.

From the moment he arrived, every hardship, every anxiety, every want, every penance turned into perfect joy, for brother Anthony enjoyed the sublime spirituality of mutual love.

From then on he took off on what was to be his straight, sure road to sanctity. He first went to Africa, as he had planned, to continue the marvelous adventures the five Franciscans had begun, and to seek, as they did, and as St. Vincent de Saragozza did before them, the glorious crown of martyrdom. But an unexpected illness suddenly clipped his wings and thwarted his dreams, forcing him to return home.

While at sea, a terrifying storm cast him off, shipwrecked, on the coast of Sicily. He then had the insight of seeing this fortuitous event as the will of God, and also found the strength to embrace it with joy and to abandon himself to it with simplicity, sacrificing his long cherished plans forever.

He then traveled north to Italy, spending some time in Assisi, at the hermitage of Montepaolo and in Forlì. Brother Francis called him "my bishop" and put him in charge of teaching his Franciscan brothers theology.

Then he reached Padua, and there, in Padua, in his stupendous intellectual maturity, and at the peak of his asceticism he became for all the Saint par excellence.

But to understand and fully fathom the dazzling light of his sanctity we must recall the light he had detected and whose secret he had instantaneously captured in the pure eyes of the friars who, so long before had come to beg at the abbey in Coimbra. Indeed the true origin and the clue to the splendid intellectual maturity and the very asceticism which would, one day, enroll him in the ranks of the Doctors of the Church, lie in St. Anthony's total detachment from all his wealth of doctrine when, so many years before, he climbed up the hill to the little hermitage.

St. Anthony being placed on an oxcart by his companions. **On Friday, June 13, 1231, Anthony had an attack of weakness. Feeling his end was near he asked to be brought from his hermitage of Camposanpiero back to his beloved Padua. He died at Arcella, near the gates of the city, saying to the friars who were with him, "I see my Lord." He was then 36. The following year he was canonized.**

3) C. M. Anthony, "Saint Anthony of Padua" (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911), p.15.

Changing themselves to change the world

by LU RELL

December 28, 1979 — January 1, 1980. Every night, in those four days ending this year, the sixty windows of the Mariapolis Center[1] as well as all the windows of the two coach houses in the backyard were lighted. A celebration? Yes, in many senses. Full to capacity, the Mariapolis Center was hosting a very joyful group: fifty-one Gen 2 girls.

The Gen 2 are young people forming the second generation of the Focolare Movement. They came to life in 1967. They are very united to those who passed on to them the spirituality of unity. With this strong bond of love they prove that no age barrier can separate generations when their lives are centered on the same ideals.

The Gen who gathered in Chicago to end 1979 and begin 1980 together, had come from all over the country. Those from Texas and California hoped that a white scenery would add a joyful note to their sojourn in Chicago. It did not snow! But from the smiles on their faces as the time was passing and the sun kept shining (which is unusual for December days in Chicago), they did not seem to mind.

Some Gen had come from Canada, from Toronto, Montreal and as far west as Vancouver.

Why did they come?

"I came to build unity with the other Gen," said Carol from California, "and then bring it back home." And Lucia from Indiana, "I knew these days would strengthen the fire that burns inside of me, urging me to go out and always love, love everyone." "I came because I want to grow in the love of God." These and many more, similar to these, were the answers to my question, "Why did you come?" Perhaps they could all be summarized in what the Gen themselves say when they describe who they are. "Our goal: a daring one, giving our contribution to the realization of Jesus' last prayer, 'That all may be one.' Our experience: we have seen that by changing ourselves we can change the world. We start by trying to be one among us so that the unity of all might come closer."

For some it was not easy to be present. There were parents to be reassured, financial difficulties to overcome, projects to leave behind, days off to obtain. For Paula, from Massachusetts, the problem was an important role in a comedy which was being performed during the days of the convention. "I knew I had to make a choice," she said. "Human reasons on why I should stay home were bothering me, but I came trying to seek his kingdom before anything else, trusting in his love for me, and leaving every worry in his hand."

The presence of Jesus in every person was the main topic of this convention. The theme was developed each day through the talks written by Chiara Lubich on the subject.

"It was an examination of conscience," said Alba, a very lively Gen from Boston, after the first talk. "An examination of conscience," as someone else explained, "which led to a greater desire to love and serve Jesus in everyone."

Other topics were spoken of during the convention. One was particularly important. It dealt with the love of the cross. The Gen accepted wholeheartedly the invitation that

Rome, November 20, 1979

Dearest Gen:

Perhaps you would like to hear a word which would say everything, which would contain the whole truth and could be a guideline for living the true life.

I was meditating on this myself, in these days.

Well Gen, I came to the conclusion that the most certain way to reach perfection is that of embracing suffering out of love.

This was the conviction of all the saints throughout the centuries.

The fact is that each of them wanted to follow Jesus and he has clearly said how to do it: "If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross every day and follow me."

". . . take up his cross."

To follow him, the Perfect one, only one thing is necessary: to welcome our crosses, our sufferings.

We all have crosses. Well then let us get up in the morning with a new heart. We know: one would like to reject suffering, set it aside, forget about it. This is human nature. But Christians act differently. Being followers of Christ, they know therefore they embrace suffering wholeheartedly.

Which will be the results, the fruits?

All the virtues *will blossom in the hearts of the Christians: patience, purity, meekness, poverty, temperance and so on.*

And with all the virtues Christians will reach perfection, the true life.

Is it a deal?

Every person who wants to reach a goal must be ready for hard work, sacrifices and a lot of effort.

Our goal is Jesus.

In order to follow him we must love suffering.

My best wishes that you may be worthy of him.

Your Chiara

Chiara Lubich extended to them in her letter of last November printed on this page.

Every night, during the sharing groups, which were also part of the convention, the participants communicated to one another the desire to welcome all their crosses, big or small, or else they shared how they had already tried to do it during those days. "I found myself relaxing — said Lucia — I knew that everybody here was trying to love, so I was just taking their love for granted. It was a big conversion for me. I took the step to start loving again without expecting anything, loving all the difficulties so that my love for the others could be greater. I began from little things. For instance, to serve the others during meals, rather than taking the food first for myself . . . "

The days went by very fast. The convention was not made of meetings only. There were hours for sports in a nearby gym, joyous, prolonged meals with a lot of sharing at the table, time to work in the kitchen, time to play and sing, time to write to those who had not been able to come.

There was even time left to prepare a little show for the last evening. "I have experienced what unity can accomplish, not only in meetings or sharing groups, but also in the preparation of our minifest," said Mary from Chicago. "It was not a perfect thing, we knew it, but it has been a chance to experience Jesus in our midst,[2] to share the talents that each of us

had, to accept the shortcomings and overcome the moments of impatience and intolerance."

The climax of the convention was the New Year's Eve midnight mass. It was a point of arrival and a beginning, a moment of reflection and an opportunity to take another step in the love of God. One by one, at the offertory, the Gen read aloud their resolutions as a commitment which they wanted to take together.

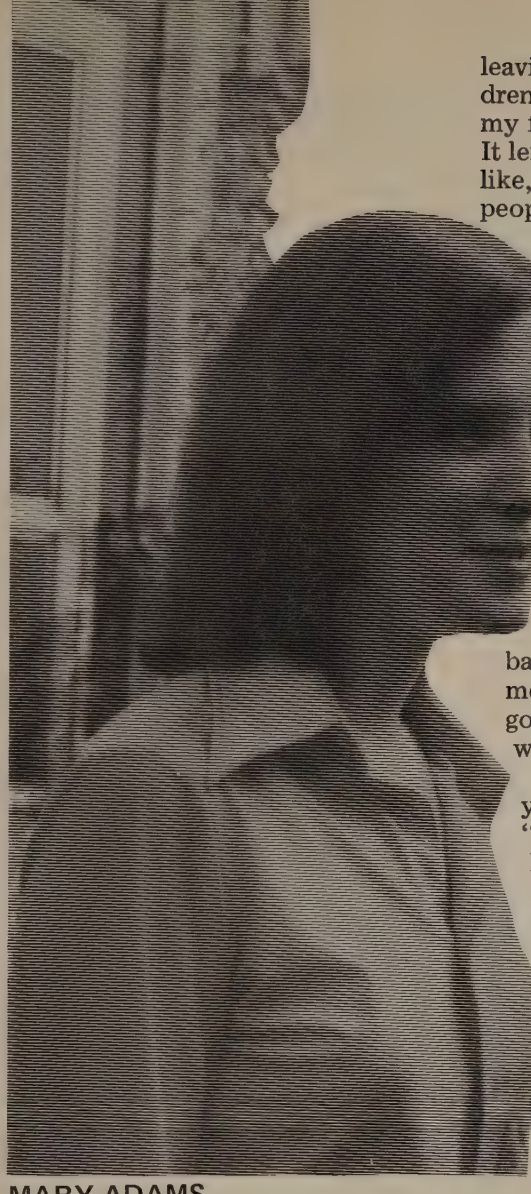
Here are some of them: "To love Jesus crucified and Forsaken with a pure love, without ever stopping." "To live each present moment for you, Jesus." "To give Jesus the first place in my life and always love him in my neighbor." "To love with such fire in my heart to be able to communicate it to all those I meet." "I want to be like a brush that will help paint the picture of a new humanity."

The resolutions were written on orange paper and then pasted on a big poster previously prepared with pictures of schools, factories, nursing homes, hospitals and many other environments. The poster represented another subject which had also been reviewed during the meetings. It had to do with a project of the Gen called, "Go out to those around us and make their suffering our own." Gen from various cities had related their efforts to help the poorest, the loneliest, the least they had come to know in their cities and neighborhoods.

On New Year's day the convention ended and early in the afternoon the first Gen began to leave. Asked what it had been for her, Paula from San Antonio answered, "the convention gave me a conviction of always doing my best to love no matter what."

And Paula from Boston added, "I had made my choice the first day to really try to love and every day it seemed to be so true that we can never outdo God in generosity. I feel I have received so much, I cannot put it into words. It's all here in my heart. I feel God has given me the hundredfold."[3] ■

1) Center of formation of the Focolare Movement.
2) "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst" (Matt. 18:20).
3) "And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life" (Matt. 19:29).



MARY ADAMS

AN INTERESTING STORY

My earliest recollection goes back to when I was three years old. Turning around in the car seat as we went to visit my father in the hospital I saw that the bunny rabbit I had just been given was torn at the head. I cried unconsolably until my mother reassured me, "Don't worry. We can have the bunny sewn at the hospital. The nurse will fix it for us."

My father had just had a cerebral hemorrhage. I entered the room and ran to his side; it is the only memory I have of him. Shortly after, he died leaving my mother with four children to raise and provide for. I felt my father's absence in many ways. It left unanswered questions in me like, "Why do people die? Why do people have to suffer?"

To support us, my mother worked for a missionary order of priests in the office of their seminary. As a result, over the years many missionaries came to our house. They were family to us, giving us moral support and teaching us children to love each other.

In particular, there was one American missionary who had been in the Philippines and was soon to go back there. One night he called me over and said, "Mary, I am going to the Philippines, and I will be back in seven years. How old will you be in seven years?" I counted on my fingers, "I'll be fourteen." When he left, I watched his plane take off. I felt strangely empty, all alone, and yet free. As the plane disappeared I sensed something of what must be the infinity of God.

Then, in the fifth grade, I made the resolution of my life. I resolved never to hurt anyone. Behind my earnest decision lay my own sensitivity to the differences between my family and other families, as well as one other experience. In those years we took in boarders to help support ourselves. I became very fond of the last one and suffered with her through the sad events of her life that she shared with me, young as I was.

While growing up it was painful not to have all the toys and things the other children had but the hardships had the effect of drawing us children all the more closely together around mother. We didn't have much but we had love, a strong religious faith, and a lot of freedom. I loved to walk around the house bare foot in sloppy old clothes, eating at irregular hours and such. In short, I loved my disorganized life.

Things did change though. My mother remarried when I was thirteen and with that a more ordered kind of family life began for all of

us. I am still very grateful for that.

After graduating from grade school, I decided things would have to change in my personal life. I wanted to have a good time and I entered high school with the attitude of not caring about anything. I studied only what I wanted — English, philosophy and theology — for the reason that I thought I would learn the answer to the question which most touched my life which was, "Why was there suffering?" In these subjects I was happy to find people who consumed themselves in trying to answer questions like mine.

It was during this period that I began to write, too. My life seemed full of adventure; I was anticipating the surprises to come. I started college full of optimism, convinced that there I would find the answer to my question. Thomas Aquinas must have had some pertinent things to say on the matter, so it was he that I wanted to study. The late 60's and early 70's, though, were times of student strikes, drugs, and new lifestyles and among the things no longer in vogue was the study of Thomas Aquinas. To my great disappointment, he was dropped from the curriculum. The extentialist philosophers reigned, and so I read them as much as I could.

To put people at the center of my life seemed to be a logical consequence of my famous resolution to never hurt anyone. I thought in loving I would find my life's purpose and the happiness that I was looking for. I would drop anything in order to help another person in my class. This led to constant warfare with my family because they logically were trying to instill some discipline and order in my life which I strenuously rejected.

Most of my friends were involved in drugs. The temptation to "turn on" was strong, but it was enough for me to look at what drugs were doing to my friends, to dispel any fantasy ideas and longings. I tried to help them in any way I could as, horrified, I watched them go from marijuana to speed to hard drugs. Before my very eyes I saw their lives fall apart until they seemed to lose their personalities. It was another aspect of my ongoing search for the meaning of suffering.

Then one particular afternoon at home I overheard my uncle talking to my mother about experimentation on fetuses being done in Britain. It froze me. I knew about abortion but it had never closely touched my life. When I began college, though, I got to know girls who were in this situation. I wanted to know more so I went to a lecture given at a college in Minnesota. I met an Episcopalian priest there who had been a witness at the doctors' war crimes' trials in Nuremberg, Germany. His powerful experience made me see all the more clearly the sorry state of our present day moral climate. Then and there I resolved to become involved in the pro-life movement. It seemed that so little was being done. I recognized the trauma it was causing my friends in college who were in this situation and from what I could see, all efforts to educate young people on this issue were going nowhere. Since I was young, I thought I could speak in a language young people would understand. So I began to speak, not very successfully, and to try and organize youth groups in the Chicago area and nationwide, even less successfully. I gave all my energy to counseling, to speaking in high schools and colleges, on debate shows and television programs — wherever I could get myself invited.

"It seemed as though my soul had opened up, that a sort of light had come into it, that God was asking me to give Him my life . . ."

There was one strong, clear conviction that I held firm to in my work: the importance of loving the people to whom I was speaking. This remained with me even when I became gradually less involved and went back to my old lifestyle of cutting classes, debating and generally wasting a lot of time still trying to find "something" to do with my life.

It was at this time in my life that a friend of mine took me to a Focolare Center! However, I had become so wrapped up in my own ideas and projects that I really wasn't open to anything else. I had the habit of thinking I had understood something even before a person could finish what they were saying. In spite of myself, though, something about the people I met that night and their lives struck me as real and true. I made a mental note that someday I would have to look into it. In the meantime, graduation time came and I reached the culmination of four years of real frustration and restlessness. I had not received the education I had really wanted and I recognized that I myself had not pursued it as seriously as I could have. Only the time spent with other people I didn't regret.

During my college years I had been going to Mass. Although I never arrived on time, I always made it for the Communion. But I really didn't know what to say to God. I would just go, sit there and then leave. It was in contrast to my whole lifestyle — but I went.

I finally became a teacher which greatly amused me because I knew full well how I had gotten through school. All the same I felt I would make a good teacher. I did substitute teaching until, largely through the efforts of my mother because I wasn't especially motivated, I was accepted at a school of journalism. I wasn't motivated because I was thoroughly disillusioned. One thought pushed me forward. If I went to graduate school perhaps I could one day be instrumental in helping the media present the truth which I saw so distorted in my contact with the in-fighting against abortion. I went to graduate school and it turned out to be a real shock. I had never worked before in school. I had always been in pursuit of fun, of being happy. This was a school where students seriously worked and I had a lot of homework to do, a lot of studying to catch up on. Each day I had to prepare a story on a different event. This took me from the entertainment life of Chicago to the political beat, and then back to school. Because I wasn't used to intellectual discipline it was very hard for me to write stories. It took me a long time and I often thought I would flunk. You had to maintain a "B" average, and I saw a "C" coming. I was left alone with myself and my own inadequacy and yet I felt the self-dignity that God gave me which was irrespective of the school or anyone else's opinion of me.

At the end of that intense year I was exhausted. I had not eaten well for almost a year and I was

very discouraged. The spark of values that I had hoped to re-kindle in the field of journalism was not understood and seemed to be long dead. It disheartened me. The whole school was one great void for me. Even the buildings seemed to be filled with this emptiness. At a frenetic pace I had gone from the news rooms of Chicago's political buildings, law buildings and courts to the night life to cover the stand-up comedians in the different bars around town. Mine was an insincere world and it filled me with a sense of desolation. I would go to Mass every day for twenty minutes and sit there exhausted; I didn't know why I was there. I was a desert inside. I could see no possibility of change; much less a point to it all. Many nights I would go to sleep crying. Until one night the words came to me, "Okay, God, if you're still here, I am too. I accept all this." And immediately peace returned. In my own vague way, I knew I wasn't alone.

As soon as I graduated I just about collapsed physically. The doctor suggested I go to a clinic for further examinations but I felt certain that just with rest I would recover. In fact, it was a systemic virus, and I was too exhausted to do any activity that would require even the smallest amount of physical exertion. So I began a summer of rest. It was then that I recalled my promise to look up those people in the Focolare. It was the right moment for me; now I was ready to know more.

The summer meeting of the Focolare Movement, the Mariapolis, was fast approaching and I was looking forward to going. But I was still physically and emotionally worn-out. When my parents told me they were taking me on a trip to Spain which would be the same time as the Mariapolis, I unexpectedly broke down in tears. I didn't have the strength to resist them as I would have done in the past, so I went. I saw beautiful things and I loved the country. It was a totally new culture to me. I returned home rested but still unhappy, and more resolved than ever to go to the Mariapolis the following year. The Mariapolis came and my sister told me, "I'm going. You can come if you want." I replied, "Of course, I'm going!" I went with my note pad and my pencil and a sincere cynicism, though. It couldn't be real that people lived the Gospel in society as I knew it. I watched from the steps because I didn't want to sit down. I sometimes even left the hall to walk around. I was just restless. My sister couldn't believe it either. We were both pure skeptics. Each evening we returned to the room where we slept to say, "You know what happened today? You won't believe it, it's just too much." But we were both beginning to believe it. I noticed how changed she was with other people and I realized what was happening to me. I felt God warming my life with his light and his love. He was showing himself to me as a father. The years of searching blindly seemed to all make sense now and the "whys" of my life found meaning in His "why" on the cross.

After the fourth day there my sister and I looked at each other as we sat on our beds, and said, "Yes, this is it. This is really what we have been looking for." We then got up and went to the cafeteria. A new life had started for us. In our efforts to love always and everyone, we went a little overboard: carrying people's trays away before they were finished eating, and the like, but we were so happy, so really happy. I had gone to the Mariapolis determined to set my life in order, with plans to marry afterward. But there, a sentence struck me very strongly, seeming to burn my soul: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his way of holiness, and all these things will be given you besides."[2] I didn't know where it would lead me and there were moments of fear, but the desire to put God in the first place in my life was even stronger.

When the Mariapolis was over I went home full of joy and started teaching school. My sister was in the Art Department and I was in the English Department. It was a small school and we agreed to keep mutual and constant charity so that Jesus could be in our midst. The students would stop and watch us when either she came to my room or I went to her room. Our relationship had taken on a new dimension. It seemed to be the kind that we had always been working toward. We didn't talk about our new life and how we tried to live the Gospel, but the children as well as the teachers felt the harmony our relationship brought. The year passed quickly and this time we helped in the preparations for the next Mariapolis.

My sister and I again went together and we were exhausted on the bus. Our other sister had just moved from one state to another with her five children and we had gone to help. We hardly talked the whole way but we felt like we were going home. During the trip a prayer kept coming to me that we used to say as children. It had been my father's favorite, the prayer of Saint Ignatius, "Take, O Lord, into your hands my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding, my will, my family and my friends. All that I am and have, you have given to me, and I surrender them unto you to be so disposed in accordance with your holy will. Give me thy love and thy grace. With these I am rich enough and desire nothing more." This prayer kept running through my mind so much that I wondered why. I put the thought aside, and continued to observe the color of the scenery.

At the Mariapolis, one idea became clear to me — "My great plans for marriage and a family might give me every happiness I thought I could have wanted up to now, but they may not be forever. Then they would not fill my heart." Something new had gradually been awakening inside me — a new love for Jesus. He was becoming everything for me. In the Mariapolis there was a song, "Heart for a Heart" sung during the intervals. Its words, "A heart for a heart, your heart for my heart. If I lose everything that is not, everything that is good yet not you, I will love with a heart of fire, a heart for a heart right now," seemed to be meant for me. It seemed as though my soul had opened up, that a sort of light had come into it, that God was asking me to give Him my life . . . I was full of suffering but was at the same time experiencing a much more surpassing joy. I said yes immediately. ■

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1) Refers to the sufferings of Jesus on the cross when he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).
2) Mt. 6:33.

Images FOR words

'If in the distance
you cannot see the goal of your journey,
do not separate
yourself from the cross
and it will carry you there.'

St. Augustine
(Homily on the Gospel of John)

The very young and the Gospel

One day (while I was in Rome) I had very little money left. I had wanted to save this little bit to get a souvenir, but on our way back to the Mariapolis Center[1] we realized at the train station that we had to take a taxi there. When we got there we had to pay the cab driver. It turned out that I was the only one that still had money. At first, I thought, "If I give this, I'll be left with no money at all." But right away I realized that I had to give God the first place and not this money which was already taking over me. So I gave everything I had, but it still wasn't enough to pay for the whole fare. Right after I remembered one of the words of life: "Seek first the kingdom of God, his holiness and all these things will be given you besides".[2] I got the hundredfold because another Gen found some money at the bottom of her purse and it was enough to pay for the rest. This was really beautiful for me,because I understooc how true this was: that if I do my part God will take care of the rest. Even though I lost something small, I gained something greater and more beautiful which was God and the happiness he gave me.

Susan, 15

I was at school one day. It was right after music class. I suddenly went into a severe asthma attack. When I called my mother she said I had to go home because the asthma attack was so bad. At first I was upset that I would have to miss school, but then I remembered that this was suffering and suffering must be loved. When we were in the car my mother told me that I couldn't take music anymore because the doctors recently had cut down on a strong drug for my asthma. When I was singing, exercising my lungs brought on an asthma attack. I really enjoy music so I was kind of mad. Then I thought that this is my special suffering from Jesus and I should be happy he chose me to receive this gift. So thinking of this I tried to love Jesus Forsaken[3] to the fullest.

Bernadine, 13

Everyday at school, I walk through the same corridor to get to my classes and I pass a girl who doesn't like me. Whenever she sees me she makes fun of me and calls me names. She also talks about me behind my back. Even though she does this, I love Jesus in her and whenever I see her I say hi. One day I passed her again and I said hi. She just ignored me and started saying bad things and lies about me to her friend. When I heard all the really mean things which she was saying about me that weren't true, I started to get mad. I told myself that from then on I'd ignore her too. But then I remembered the word of life, "Love your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength,"[4] so I knew that if I wanted to love God I had to keep loving her to the end.

The next day I was walking through the corridor when again I passed the same girl, so I greeted her. As usual, she just kept walking. All of a sudden she dropped her books. At first I was just going to keep walking, but then I remembered the word of life so I stopped and helped her pick up her books. After I picked up the second to the last book for her she said "thank you," but in a curt way. I was about to leave when I saw that there was still one more book with papers scattered all over the floor. At first, I thought maybe she could pick them up herself since I had already helped her, but I knew that I couldn't just stop there. I had to love her to the end. So I helped her pick up the rest of her books and papers. She was really happy and this time she smiled at me and said "thanks."

Now, whenever I pass her, she says hi to me too. One day I'll tell her about the "Word of life."

Susan, 15

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1) Center of formation of the Focolare Movement.
2) Matt. 19:29.
3) Refers to the suffering of Jesus on the cross when he cried out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).
4) Mark 12:30.

MUSIC

EDDA MOSER: 'The more famous we are . . . the more is expected of us . . .'

She first came to the Met — the Metropolitan Opera of New York — as one of the three Rhine Maidens in Wagner's "Das Rheingold." It was little more than a "walk on" part, except that here she was floating back and forth in the green-blue depth of the river, jealously guarding with her companions the river's golden treasure which was to bring so much woe and disaster to everyone throughout the four long-winded operas that make up the famous Ring cycle by Richard Wagner.

Yet, even at that time Edda Moser, today one of the truly great sopranos from Germany, was already singled out for a major career. For even in that modest role she was part of a selected cast of the Vienna Opera Company brought here by the great conductor Herbert von Karajan. Since then she has often come back to sing at the Met, of course in roles far different from her watery debut in 1969.

Her first featured, though not quite leading role, in 1970, was also a mythical creature, the glittering, part-good, part-evil Queen of the Night in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "The Magic Flute." It is a role known for its two fiendishly difficult coloratura arias, and for most sopranos it is no more than a vehicle to show off their vocal bravura. The character is in fact rather vague, ill-defined in its symbolism, but Edda Moser knew how to imbue even her with human depth, love, hate, and suffering.

As we learned more about Edda Moser as an artist, we found that this is indeed her approach to every character she is to portray. She always looks for depth and she unfailingly finds it in the creations of most great composers, but more and above anyone else in her beloved Mozart. So it is no mere coincidence that her second, and this time definitely major Met role was that of Donna Anna in Mozart's "Don Giovanni." She told us how it came about when, after her first Met audition during the Rhine Maiden era, and the subsequent success as Queen of the Night, it was the General Manager, Sir Rudolf Bing himself who asked her what she would like to do next and how, at that moment, she found the courage to ask for no less than Donna Anna.

"Donna Anna is the most complex of Don Giovanni's three leading ladies, and the most mysterious: proud in her virtue, set on revenge yet vacillating in her emotions — a fascinating character I have been dreaming to do for a long time. And so, when I finally stepped out onto the stage to sing it for the first time at the Met, it was, I can't describe it, it was a hallowed moment."

Over the years Edda Moser has almost been identified with this role in opera houses all over the world, and only a few weeks ago, she also impersonated it in a film version of Don Giovanni directed by Joseph Losey and shown in movie theaters in New York and all over the United States. In this movie version, which in many ways deviates from Mozart's original opera, the director's concept of Donna Anna does not fully agree with Miss Moser's, yet she found it an interesting experience and enjoyed the filming.

"You know, exploring the character of Donna Anna may fill a whole lifetime," she pondered, "because she is always seen in a different light. Did she really have a personal relationship with Don Giovanni? What kind of relationship did she have with Don Ottavio? The answers to these questions change with every new production, with every conductor, with every stage director. It is something different, something new every time, and sometimes I love it and am happy, and sometimes I'm deeply disappointed. But who knows who is right? Only Mozart himself could tell."

Another role close to Edda Moser's heart is that of Constanze in "The Abduction from the Serail" also by Mozart, an opera which has not been performed at the Met for over thirty years. This 1979-80 season it was revived in a sparkling new production by John Dexter, under the baton of the Met's young Music Director James Levine.

"I've been fighting about this role with practically every conductor I sang it with," said Miss Moser, "because I feel strongly that Constanze is Mozart's 'Isolde,'[1] both in musical and dramatical depth — a woman capable of love, fidelity and loyalty even unto death." The story is simple enough: Constanze and her companion are captured by a Turkish Pasha and eventually rescued, amid all kinds of horrors and perils, by her lover Belmonte, thanks also to a final generous gesture by her captor, the Pasha himself, a yarn most of light comedy is made of. "But in Mozart's music there is such depth and suffering, so much greatness and nobility — — yet no conductor, so far, has been able to grasp it and have the humility to admit it.

"And now, at last, I have had the good fortune to meet James Levine, and I really believe that he was sent from heaven. Here was finally someone capable of showing how great Mozart really is, capable to bring out all the beauty and exquisiteness, and sorrow one may perhaps find in a St. Matthew Passion by Bach or in one of the great oratories. In the 'Abduction' there are of course all the humorous scenes as well, but what really lies in Belmonte's and in Constanze's music nobody could understand as intimately as Jimmy Levine. And it does not matter whether he is American, or whether he did or did not have a European education. When someone has Mozart in him, he may be from another planet and it would make no difference. This kind of rapport is spiritual, way above and beyond all tradition or upbringing."

Apart from her great love for Mozart, Edda Moser also likes to sing Italian opera, especially Verdi and Puccini, which she does regularly at the Vienna Opera, and she also loves to give recitals of art songs or "Lieder" by Schubert, Schumann, and Richard Strauss.

And this summer, at the famous Salzburg Festival, she will sing all four female heroines of "The Tales of Hoffman" by Jacques Offenbach: four completely different characters both vocally and dramatically — from the high coloratura of the mechanical doll Olympia, to the lyrical soprano of the fragile, sensitive Antonia, to the dark mezzo of Giulietta, the courtesan, and of course Stella, the actress. "It is quite a task, but thank heaven James Levine will be there again to conduct, so I feel safe. I'm also looking forward to have Placido Domingo as my partner. He is the greatest tenor in the world today — at least I think so, because of his

(continued on page 28)

LC cuisine

CHEESE AND ONION SOUP
(4 servings)

2 large onions, finely chopped — 1 tbs. flour — 5 cups of water — about 10 slices of Italian bread — butter — 2 oz. Swiss cheese, cut in strips — 2 egg yolks — freshly grated bread (without crust) — grated parmesan cheese 3/4 tsp. of salt — pepper

Saute the onions in butter, sift in the flour and let it brown. Add water and salt and boil for about 15 minutes.

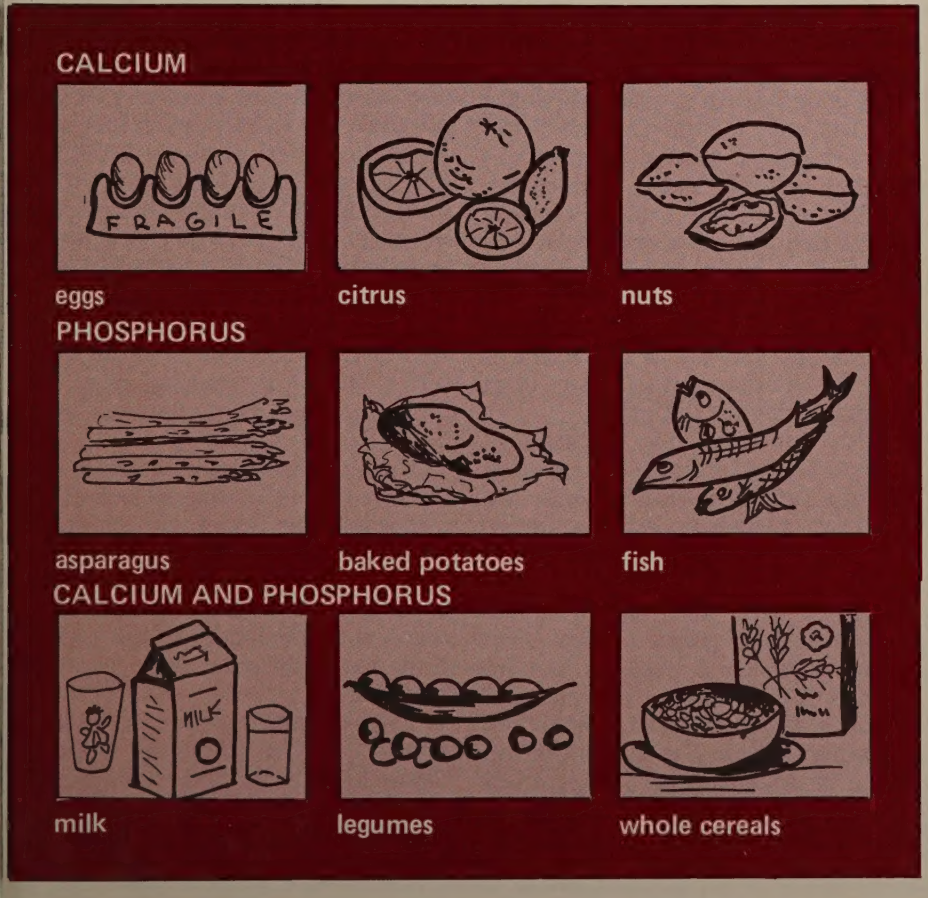
Brown the bread in butter. Then lay it on the bottom of a deep casserole dish. Cover with swiss cheese and season with salt and pepper. Beat the egg yolks and pour over the bread. Finally add the boiling broth, sprinkle with parmesan cheese and grated bread and place in a hot oven (400°) for about 5 minutes.

THE NEED FOR MINERALS

Proteins, carbohydrates, fats — we are all familiar with their functions, composition, required or recommended daily intake, symptoms of deficiency, etc., etc., etc. The mass media has generously informed us on these matters. Less well-known, however, is the need we also have for minerals. In this issue some of the food containing calcium and phosphorus are presented.

PHOSPHORUS *is the second most abundant mineral in the human organism. Besides its important role in bone formation, phosphorus is essential for certain metabolic reactions and helps to maintain the acid-base balance in and around the cells. It also stimulates growth of hair.*

CALCIUM *is found in large quantities in the human body — in the bone structure, teeth, muscles and the blood. Calcium has several important functions, including building up the bone structure, helping blood coagulation and regulating the functions of the neuromuscular system.*



LC humor

POCKET DICTIONARY

Bank teller:
a man who counts

The golden calf:
nowadays you find it at the butcher counter.

Sick person:
At home they are anxious, but it is enough to take them to the hospital and they become patient.

Expert:
A person capable of finding a problem for every solution.

LC tips

Shiny dishes — emergency solution

Oh! The dinner for ten went perfectly but when you open the closet at 11:00 P.M. — help! No dish soap! Don't fear my friend. Take a handful of ordinary white flour and pour it in a basin of warm — *not* boiling — water. Rinse well. Your dishes will get clean and shiny just the same.

Hair spray for . . .

What causes more dismay than spots on clothes from a ball-point pen? It makes one think that perhaps our ancestors who chiseled rocks had life easier. But modern ways of writing came together with modern hairstyles. Strange combination? Not at all. The next time you get a spot on a piece of clothing from a ball-point pen, spray it with a little hair spray, then rub it off with a clean rag and the spot will disappear. Hard to believe? Try it!

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MUSIC

(continued from page 26)

superior artistic culture and because of his personal humility . . . "

"Humility in Domingo, the proud and self-assured superstar?" we wondered, perhaps not too kindly. "It's the last thing one would associate him with."

"It may seem hard to believe," Miss Moser replied, "but it is true that the more famous we are, the more we are in demand, the more of our records are sold, the more is expected of us. And so we must really walk in the deeper humility, if we want to keep our inner balance and peace. I believe that humility is the most essential factor in the life and in the work of a musician, whether he is a singer or a pianist, or violinist. I'm not too sure about conductors — perhaps they can't afford to be too humble because of the gigantic machinery they must control. Yet, I think that a deep, inner humility must exist in the really great ones — and I am sure there is plenty of it in Jimmy, thank God."

We could end our story right here, with this affirmation of faith by a beautiful artist who believes in the good. But let us conclude by proving her right, by quoting the words of conductor James Levine himself, in a recent interview:

"I believe in spending as much time as possible with my orchestra, in growing together with my musicians, for this is after all what I'm here to do if I want to serve the composer effectively."

"To serve the composer." If this is not humility in a musician, I don't know what it is.

Vera Giannini

1) Isolde, in Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde" is the apotheosis of love and sacrifice.

THE APEX OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

(continued from page 10)

The growth of faith, and hence of the religious life, results in a gradual emancipation from the illusions of vain and selfish ideas. Through meditation, understood as a flight towards the source of light, and by the means of prayer, man realizes a kind of dialogue with the Eternal.

Supernatural assistance is given to us through the sacrament of the Eucharist which establishes divinity in our humanity, rousing us to a life as beautiful as the most sacred treasure of the infinite creative power of the Father.

So we have the interior life of faith, with its vitality expressed in outward form. One stage determines the other, and this generates a new way of life which is completely Christian, in its opinion, its work, its relationships; in art, science, and in rest..."Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in Heaven." (Mt. 7:21)

From the above quotation we can see that faith is translated into works, believing becomes doing; there is an example, a praxis (as the Marxists say) which is born from first principles, and in its turn, reinforces those same principles. Therefore we see that deepening within and action without are not two distinct activities; they are the same thing, viewed from either faith or from good works. Seen like this, man in his activity is the same as man in contemplation. One does not exist without the other.

With this in mind it is clear that cultural and economic resources, or worldly publicity and acclaim are no longer sufficient. What is needed is a new and uninterrupted contact with Life, who is God, by the means of love, the oxygen of the soul. Religion grows within man and — it seems a paradox but instead it is an obvious consequence of it — at the same time a logical development occurs as collaboration and understanding of our brothers creates communion, and this makes life together a step-ladder leading to life with God.

In this way religion spreads, and being involved with institutions and historical events, results in an activity which is essentially that of building a moral and spiritual kingdom in which God/Life, reigns over the desert of Satan/Death.

The Lord told Moses to say to the people: — "You shall be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." (Ex. 19:6) The Lord was referring to thousands of ex-slaves capable of doing hard manual work on the land, or bricklaying, who had escaped from Egypt and had come to the desert without any food or water. This means that everyday activity becomes kingly, priestly, a means whereby the divine is brought to be within the person, "so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." (2 Cor. 4:10). In virtue of this spiritual growth that we call divinization, the ordinary activities, when performed with a religious motive assume a sublime character; every act done in this light becomes a collaboration with God, a part in his work. It becomes not just a job or a profession, but a priesthood which, weighed against the meager reward of physical and intellectual efforts, assures happiness without end on earth and in heaven. It gives a reason for living, and in this living it teaches us to make an intelligent use of our day for our own unlimited good. It makes the physical body a temple, work a prayer, life together a gift of God/Love. So the very economics of earthly life is part of the Kingdom of God. "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed every day." (2 Cor. 4:16)

Religion today, in many countries, is not to be found so much in overwhelming external manifestations, but rather in the meditation made to conform oneself to Christ, in such a way that our daily existence unfolds itself as the will of God, carried out with joy and knowledge.

The Church today is looking forward to an immense work of evangelization in the light of which, Jung's externalization, laicism, and atheism, reveal themselves as the deficiency or absence of the Gospel.■

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one...that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me..." (Jn. 17,23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

At the core of this large group of youth, are Gen who have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love. The Gen use all possible means to share with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

NCP spirituality

chiara lubich

when did we see you, lord?

The extraordinary dignity of every person, each individual's capacity for the infinite, and the need to discover God in our fellow human beings are some of the recurring themes here. The question, "Who is my neighbor?" is answered in the light of the Old and New Testaments, and in terms of our relationship with other Christians, with members of other religions, and with non-believers. Reflecting on the more than thirty-five years of experience of the Focolare Movement, the author describes how, by loving others, people can move from lives that are meaningless and empty to lives that are full and, in a real sense, divine.

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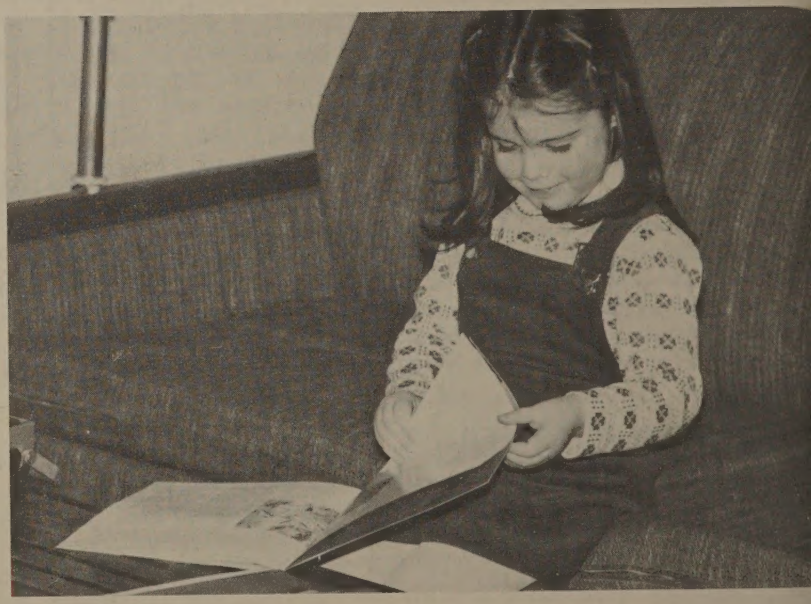

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